

This country—out of the evil done to this country is coming incredible good, an understanding that to be an American means to love your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. When the enemy hit us, they didn't know who they were hitting. They hit the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

It's my honor to be here with you tonight. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the Grandville Ballroom at the Grandover Resort and Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Senators Bob Dole and Lauch Faircloth; Bill Cobey, chairman, and Linda O. Shaw, national committeewoman, North Carolina Republican Party; and President Hamid Karzai of the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan.

Remarks on Proposed Legislation To Establish the Department of Homeland Security July 26, 2002

The President. Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the White House. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. I appreciate so very much being joined here by firefighters and police officers and emergency personnel, public officials at the local level, the State level—I know we've got some Governors here. And I want to thank you all for coming.

We're on the cusp of doing something right for America. And I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who are here. I want to thank the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Transportation, the head of the Office of National Drug Policy. I appreciate Kay James being here. I want to thank Tom Ridge for his hard work.

But most importantly, I want to thank the Members of Congress who got up pretty early after not much sleep—[*laughter*—for your hard work and your care for our country. I see Senator Lieberman, who is really working hard in the Senate to cobble together a homeland security bill that will work. I appreciate Senator Nickles being here as well; Senator Bennett from Utah. Thank you all for coming.

I really want to thank Chris Shays and Jim Gibbons for coming, and Mac

Thornberry as well—the three fine Republican Members, along with Steve LaTourette. But I also want to thank Ellen Tauscher from the State of California. She's been working really hard to make this bill a bipartisan bill, where the American people can see both Republicans and Democrats working together to do what's right for the country. I really want to thank you all for coming.

I also want to thank the heads of agencies who are here. Jim Loy, who's the Under Secretary for Transportation, Chief Operating Officer of the Transportation Security Agency—served our country nobly as the—running the Coast Guard and has now put on another uniform called a coat and tie. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Tom Collins, who does head the Coast Guard, Robert Bonner, who runs the Customs. I want to thank Jim Ziglar for running the INS. I appreciate again my Governor friends, Rowland, King, and Patton for coming up today. And I also want to thank my Mayor, Anthony Williams, the Mayor of Washington, DC.

I want to acknowledge Mike Carona of Orange County, California, who's with us, the sheriff. Where are you, Mike? There you are, Mike, looking right at you. I appreciate you coming. He represents the

local officials, what we call in Texas the high sheriffs. He's the fellow who recently apprehended the killer of Samantha Runnion there in California. I want to congratulate you for your good work, helping make your community as safe as possible.

America, we're in our 10th month on the war on terror. And we've got a great deal to show for our efforts. We're making progress. And that's important for the American people to know. Our country continues to lead a mighty coalition of civilized nations, all joined in facing a common threat to humanity.

This is the first war of the 21st century, and we're making progress. We and our allies have uncovered terrorist cells all across the world. We're disrupting plots. We're doing a pretty good job of seizing their assets and cutting off their money. And we've got them on the run. See, these are international killers. That's all they are. And we're getting them on the run. So far we've captured over 2,000 of the terrorists, and just about that many weren't quite as lucky. But there's still a lot of them out there.

And what you need to know as leaders in your communities is that no matter how long it takes, we're going to run them down one by one and bring them to justice. And we do so not only to defend freedom and civilization, itself; we do so to protect the American people, which is our highest calling.

We defeat the threat abroad, and we're doing a pretty good job here at home as well. Congress has passed new laws to help. Congress has already acted to help our law enforcement agencies investigate and prosecute terrorists. Congress responded quickly after September the 11th in a fashion that made me proud, and I know that made the American people proud.

We've strengthened our aviation security and tightened our borders. We've stockpiled medicines to defend against bioterrorism. We've developed new technologies to help first-responders identify and react

to attacks. We've dramatically improved information-sharing amongst our intelligence agencies. Governor Tom Ridge has produced the first comprehensive plan in our Nation's history to protect America from terrorist attack. It's a good piece of work, and I appreciate you and your staff, Tom, for working hard on it.

We're taking urgent measures against clear vulnerabilities, and now we must also prepare our Government and our people for the long-term vigilance that the new threats will require. I say "long-term" because this is a determined enemy we face. This isn't just a one-battle war. This is a war that will occupy not only our time, but will occupy the time of future Presidents and future Members of the United States Congress and future agency heads. The number one priority of this Government and the future Governments will be to protect the American people against terrorist attack.

And so, therefore, I believe it's important, we must create a Department of Homeland Security to prepare America for the permanent duty—for the permanent duty—of defending the homeland. And these Members here today agree with me. We need this Department for one main reason: America needs a group of dedicated professionals who wake up each morning with the overriding duty of protecting the American people.

The agencies in this Department will have other duties—no question about it—but no higher responsibility. Protecting American citizens from harm is the first priority, and it must be the ruling priority of all of our Government.

The Department of Homeland Security will have four primary tasks. It will control our borders and prevent terrorists and weapons from entering our country. The way I like to put it is, we need to know who's coming in and why they're coming in and what they're bringing in with them, and whether or not they're leaving when they say they're going to leave.

Secondly, the new Department will work with our incredibly brave and dedicated first-responders, many of—the representatives of whom are on the stage with me today. We need to be able to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. We need good cooperation between the Federal Government, the State governments, and the local governments.

We bring the best scientists together to develop technologies that will detect biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, and to discover drugs and treatments to protect our citizens. We need to harness the great genius of the American people to make sure that it's focused on the true threat of the 21st century.

And for the first time, this new Department will merge under one roof the capability to identify and assess threats to the homeland, to map those threats against vulnerabilities, and then to act to secure America. The Department of Homeland Security will draw on the knowledge and experience of every sector in America. We'll work in a collaborative way with the people who care about America, and that's the American leadership and the American people, at all levels of government.

This administration is working with Congress to forge a bipartisan bill, and I want to appreciate the members of both parties for coming this morning. I believe we're making good progress. And of course, being the modest fellow that I am, I'm willing to recognize a good idea even if it comes from Congress. *[Laughter]* Yet, it's important to understand this: I'm not going to accept legislation that limits or weakens the President's well-established authorities—authorities to exempt parts of Government from Federal labor-management relations statute—when it serves our national interest.

Every President since Jimmy Carter has used this statutory authority, and a time of war is the wrong time to weaken the President's ability to protect the American people. And as Congress debates the issue

of how to set up this Department, I'm confident they're going to look to me to say, "Well, is it being done right," after they got the bill passed. And therefore, it is important that we have the managerial flexibility to get the job done right. We can't be—we can't be micromanaged. We ought to say, "Let's make sure authority and responsibility are aligned so they can more adequately protect the homeland."

Now, look, I fully understand the concerns of some of the unions here in Washington. Somehow, they believe that this is an attempt by the administration to undermine the basic rights of workers. I reject that, as strongly as I can state it. I have great respect for the Federal employees. I travel the country as one of them, talking about how we need to work together to protect the homeland. I think of the times I've gone to Coast Guard cutters or gone to ports of authority or gone to our labs or seen our first-responders, many of whom happen to be a member of the union. Never have I said, "Show me your card." I've always said, "Thanks for being a proud American and for working hard for the American people."

So the notion of flexibility will in no way undermine the basic rights of Federal workers. Workers will retain whistle-blower protection, collective bargaining rights, and protection against unlawful discrimination. The new Secretary must have the freedom to get the right people in the right job at the right time and to hold them accountable. He needs the ability to move money and resources quickly in response to new threats, without all kinds of bureaucratic rules and obstacles. And when we face unprecedented threats, like we're facing, we cannot have business as usual.

I am—I appreciate the work of Senator Lieberman. He's working hard. I am concerned, however, the way the committee has passed out the homeland security bill. The bill doesn't have enough managerial flexibility, as far as I'm concerned. I look forward to working with the Senator and

the Republican Members to get the bill right, to make sure that when we look back at what we've done, we will have left behind a legacy, a legacy that will allow future Senators and future Members of the House and a future President to say, "I can better protect the homeland, thanks to what was done in the year 2002."

It's very interesting that Harry Truman took on the same task. And as I understand, it was on this day 55* years ago that he signed the National Security Act of 1947. It was an act that helped win the cold war by consolidating the Navy and the Army and the newly independent Air Force into what was interestingly called the National Military Establishment. [*Laughter*] It's now known as the Department of Defense. [*Laughter*]

But he thought boldly, and so did the Members of Congress. They recognized that after World War II, we were going to enter into a new era. And therefore they adjusted the sights of the Federal Government. That's what has happened now. His-

tory has called us into action. We're entering a new era, and we must adjust our sights, and we must respond.

And I know the Members here, and I know the Members on the floor that are working hard. And I'm confident we will respond in a way that will make America proud—America proud of our efforts to come together but, more importantly, America more secure in the knowledge that we're doing everything we can to protect the homeland.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless your work, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:44 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. John G. Rowland of Connecticut; Gov. Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine; Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky; Michael S. Carona, sheriff-coroner, Orange County, CA; and Alejandro Avila, who is accused of the July 16 murder of 5-year-old Samantha Runnion in Stanton, CA.

Remarks on the Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act July 26, 2002

Well, thank you all for coming, and welcome to the White House. We like to call this the people's house, and we're glad you're here. Today we celebrate the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, landmark legislation that opens the door for more than 50 million people living with disabilities—50 million Americans.

For 12 years, the ADA has proven that when people are treated with dignity and respect, our entire Nation benefits. And the best way to celebrate the progress the ADA has made is to continue and build on that progress.

I want to thank the Attorney General for coming today. I thank Elaine Chao for being here, Mel Martinez and Norm Mineta, Tony Principi, all members of my Cabinet. I appreciate Senator Bob Dole joining us today. I missed you yesterday in North Carolina, but thanks for coming. I appreciate so very much the leaders of the United States Congress who are here today with us, Senators and Members of the House of Representatives. Thank you all for taking time from what appears to be a pretty hectic time to lend your support and commitment to this vital goal, that all Americans are welcomed in America.

* White House correction.